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THE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME

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The kindergarten programme is to the kindergarten what the course of study is to the school. Usage has established the word programme, in this particular sense, until it is now so firmly fixed that the difficulty of dislodging it, to secure more uniform terminology, would probably cost more effort than it would be worth. Moreover, "course of study" has a connotation of definite conscious purpose on the part of the pupil, which scarcely describes the very playful and indirect modes of learning in the kindergarten. Suffice it to say then, that by programme we mean such organization of children's interests and activities as may fitly be made for children of from four to six years of age. The experiences chosen for them, the materials used, the playthemes and their treatment all represent a selection of what seems to offer the best conditions for growth.

This paper is a discussion of the governing principles of selection, those that we find in Froebel's theories and those that have been reinforced or modified by modern thought, with some illustrations of typical differences in method and aim engendered by different emphasis of principles.

I. FROEBELIAN PRINCIPLES

Froebel left no kindergarten programme as a distinct model to be followed, or as a type illustrative of his ideas of organization. Apparently he had the simplest possible form of organization of their total activity from day to day and from week to week. It is certain that his children took walks, worked in the garden, played games out of doors and in, looked at pictures, listened to stories, sang songs, and played at making and building. Through it all there is no indication of a typical

treatment of subjects, no hint of a logical development of "subject." Whether one searches the *Mother Play Book*, the *Pedagogics of the Kindergarten*, or the *Education of Man*, the result is the same. We find continuity in short sequences, short steps in organized play, but not long series of related incidents, "worked out" in handwork, songs, games, and stories.

This simplicity is found in the imitative plays and tiny dramas of the *Mother Play Book*. These plays have been taken by many American kindergartners as a long sequential basis for a year's work on which the activities of the kindergarten are founded. That Froebel intended this kind of use is not only problematic but impossible. They are types of experience which a child has and directions to the mother of the way in which to treat these experiences to make them fruitful through play, in which the mirror is held up to the world about of animal life and to the activities of people in the home, in industrial occupations and in festivals.

The same simplicity is to be seen in most German kindergartens today, but too often without the spontaneity and naïveté of the Froebel whose call from table-work to games, was, "Komm' Kinder, lass' uns singen and springen."

It is easily seen that while Froebel was the apostle of continuity in education and while he found it both in "short steps" and in the "long run," the programme as a highly organized continuous course of topics and developing method is a post-Froebelian achievement. The kindergartner has been forced to organize on the basis of the gift sequence in forms of life, beauty, and knowledge, modeled on those suggested by Froebel, on the typical plays of the *Mother Play*, if she be orthodox, or upon some scheme of her own devising. The programmes that are printed in the magazines, that are seen in operation in the kindergartens, show the individual bias and temperament of the kindergartner, her training, and, in general, her philosophy of life. The evolution has been away from the primitive spontaneity of Froebel and often toward over-intellectualization and formalization.

There is great diversity in the modern programme, so great

that it is difficult for the layman to determine what the kindergarten actually stands for. This diversity arises not only from natural causes, but from the varying stress that is laid upon one aspect or another of Froebel's many-sided theories. The person who believes, by temperament and training, most in his gospel of freedom and individual development, lays stress on creativeness and initiative. She who believes most strenuously in the doctrine of order and sees the gifts and the exercises with them as a demonstration of orderly process, leans toward the method of direction. The one who is imbued with belief in symbolism will choose her exercises to embody and convey to the little souls the ultimate truth of which the gift forms or the plays are outward signs, that the child's mind may, by "a series of effluxes," "impose its native forms upon the objective data of experience."

The remarkable contribution of Miss Susan Blow¹ to this subject comes at a most opportune time, and by its vigorous expositions and clear-cut definitions will be of great value in focusing attention on attempts that have recently been made to shape the current of children's ideas and habits under the guidance of definite principles. We shall not all agree with Miss Blow's classification, and many of us will not admit that her characterizations are typical of the largest and most sane existing movements in each type programme. But that is a matter of course and does not impair the value of the book to the thoughtful reader.

Truly, as Miss Blow shows us, influences have drifted in upon the kindergarten from the world of social and educational theory and have left their characteristic mark upon the molding of the kindergarten plan. Each breeze has brought influences for both good and evil, without doubt, but the general effect will be wholesome in the final summing up. It is a merciful fact in the make-up of the human mind that it cannot keep its psychology, its social theory, and its daily living in water-tight compartments and keep on moving. The children are not wholly suffer-

¹ Susan E. Blow, *Educational Issues in the Kindergarten*, Appleton & Co., 1908.

ers from this law of our consciousness. Having lived through the many phases through which the kindergarten has passed it is my belief that these phases are not the microbe diseases of its infancy, but stages in its evolution in which it has fed upon the thought found in its habitat and that it has absorbed nutriment, cast off, appropriated, assimilated, and is, by these acts of assimilative energy growing into a larger stature and finding by this means a more discriminating focus for its activities. The kindergarten has not been deformed by its stretching and groping after a clearer light, nor is it necessary to put it into a straight-jacket to bring it back to the exact form and measure of Hegelian mold out of which it sprang and from which it has begun to evolve.

It seems a most necessary thing at this juncture of kindergarten affairs to restate some of the familiar Frobelian principles of education, to reinterpret in part, and to indicate the emphasis, the reinforcement, or the departures that the general trend of modern psychology and evolutionary theory demand.

Froebel's doctrines and his life-work have a significance, even to those who are not directly interested in forwarding the kindergarten as a step in education; they have a place in the history of modern thought. Belonging as he does to the group in which we may put Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, he forms with them a kind of link between the German idealistic school of philosophy and modern thought. These men, the poets, the dramatists, the novelist, and the educational reformer, brought what were to them root principles from the regions of pure thought and realized them in the world of people and social forces through the medium of their art. In them the germinal principles of Hegelian thought become vital and dramatic, and through art they were made the possession of the world. Through them this idealistic philosophy created a hospitable atmosphere for the doctrine of evolution that followed, and which has remade our physical, our social, and our mental sciences.

The concepts of unity, the unity of man and nature, the process of growth as development, the indwelling of energy

which is one energy in all creation and the meaning of creative acts as self-revelations, the finding of truth in the symbol, all these are the basic principles, which are as warp to the art of their weaving. Goethe says:

Wouldst thou truly study nature?
 Seek the whole in every feature
 Whole at each point, at each point canst thou learn all;
 Only examine thine own heart,
 Whether thou shell or kernel art.

Tennyson, reflecting this viewpoint writes his lines:

Flower in the crannied wall,
 I pluck you out of your crannies,
 Hold you here, root and all, in my hand.
 Little flower, could I but understand
 What you are, root and all, and all in all
 I would know what God and man is.

Schiller in his poem of the "Artist" says:

The truth that had for centuries to wait;
 The truth that reason had grown old to find
 Lay in the symbol of the fair and great,
 Felt from the first by every child-like mind.

And as a final whip to the flagging creative energies of the doubting human Goethe says:

Produce, produce, produce! Though it be the smallest infinitesimal fraction of a worldkin, yet—produce!

Wordsworth writes of the significance of nature:

Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!
 Thou soul that art the eternity of thought
 not in vain
 By day and starlight thus from my first dawn
 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
 The passions that build up one human soul;
 Not with the near and vulgar works of man,
 But with high objects, with enduring things
 With life and nature.

Not only does Froebel's theory bear this quality of binding the old to the new but in himself, in his own life, he combined the attributes of philosopher and observer. While his method

of procedure was distinctly governed by a priori premises he nevertheless went to children with a most open feeling for the worth of their expressions as giving cheer to their processes of growth. This feeling of respect for the meaning of childrens' acts, this respect for their impulsive tendencies, for their primitive desires at once places Froebel in touch with modern thought despite his a priori philosophy.

While Froebel left no "ear's outline" he did make provision for continuity. He planned for plays that would progressively utilize his powers of discovery, invention, and control in the adaptation of the play materials.

The previous papers ² in this series have dealt with the gifts, that important set of Froebelian materials, a succeeding paper will deal with the scarcely less important kindergarten occupations. But as we cannot deal with the organization of activities in the kindergarten programme without touching these topics it is necessary at least to review the principles embodied in them by Froebel, in order to be clear on points of criticism or emphasis. On this ground the indulgence of the reader is begged, if there is in this paper something of repetition.

In these gifts and occupations themselves, in the descriptions to be found of the gifts in Froebel's *Pedagogics*, in the *Mother Play Book* and the *Education of Man*, we find asserted and re-asserted definitely and comprehensively the basic principles on which any course of study or programme for kindergarten or school must rest. These principles may be classified by the student of Froebel into psychologic, social, and religio-philosophic principles according as they are directed toward the development of mind in the individual, in the working out of social relationships or in securing an interpretation of the plan of the universe.

Psychological

1. The child is a self-active being whose impulses lead to all-sided growth.
2. The mind is a unit.

² Patty Smith Hill, "Value and Limitation of Froebel's Gifts," *Elementary School Teacher*, November and December, 1908.

3. Growth is continuous.

4. Being continuous, growth proceeds by stages, each stage growing out of the preceding, conditioned by it, and showing special powers and characteristics.

5. Infancy is the stage in which the child is gaining control over his own movements, through sensori-motor adjustments, and gaining through them an apprehension of meanings bound up in the objective world.

6. In early childhood the rise of speech, locomotion, and imitative play brings him into possession of a wider range of bodily control, more definite imagery, and a larger consciousness of related meanings.

7. Truth is felt by the child before it is clearly perceived. Play nourishes the "feeling" for the true and implicit in play creations.

8. As boyhood follows childhood, play merges into work, play ends are replaced by ends which the boy recognizes as on a plane more nearly approaching those of adults. Persistence and self-criticism are the powers which enter into productive work.

9. During boyhood the individual becomes capable of reflection, of discovering principles of connection, and of holding them clearly in consciousness.

One contribution of Froebel's psychology is his stress upon the *act* as the point of departure in the knowing process. The increment of impulsive act is knowledge and the renewal of the impulse. In this he anticipates the emphasis of modern educational psychology.

You will foster his impulsive movements, exercise his strength, prepare him through doing, for seeing through the exertion of his power for its comprehension. In a word you will seek through self-activity to lead him to self-knowledge.³

Another citation from the *Commentaries* has a most modern ring:

How different are the motor activities from the activities of sense, and yet how each reacts upon the other. Each one of our little plays has shown the recoil of movement upon sensation, or of sensation upon movement!⁴

³ *Mottoes and Commentaries of Froebel's Mother Play*, p. 74.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 185.

In the following quotation we find a clear statement of the sequence of mental development on the side of knowledge:

In your education of your child, therefore, let your point of departure be an effort to strengthen and develop his body, his limbs, and his senses. From the development of body, limbs, and sense, rise to their use. Move from impressions to perceptions, from perceptions to attentive observation and contemplation, from the recognitions of particular objects to their relations and dependencies, from the healthy life of the body to the healthy life of the spirit, from thought immanent in experience to pure thinking. Ascend thus from sensation to thought, from external observation to internal apprehension, from physical combination to spiritual synthesis, from a formal to a vital intellectual grasp, and so to the culture of the understanding, from the observation of phenomena and their relation to the recognition of their final cause and hence to the development and culture of life-grasping reason.⁵

Social

1. The child is a being actuated by impulses that relate him to others from the dawn of intelligence.

2. Recognition is mutely sought before speech begins; sympathy is sought in the child's pleasures, griefs, knowledge, and discoveries.

3. Speech and imitation become the great means of communication and social learning. By means of imitation the child wrests the meaning from the acts of others, while by speech he enters into conceptual systems, his own and others. Speech becomes a useful instrument for the satisfaction of desires, whether material or intellectual.

The emphasis laid by Froebel upon the community of playing and working individuals as an indispensable condition for securing education, even the education of a little child, constitutes another contribution to education.

Philosophical

1. Unity embraces all things.

2. The divine essence pervades all things.

3. All things are creations of the divine.

4. That which God creates partakes of his nature, and is in turn essentially creative.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 59.

5. The human being is the highest earthly expression of this creative energy, must be developed through creative activity.

6. The end and aim of all things is to develop and so reveal this divine essence.

7. The last stage of this self-revelation is in the recognition of his destiny, his oneness with the source of all things.

Educational Propositions

1. Education can but remove obstacles to self-revelation, and assist its course. Education should therefore be following, not prescriptive. Freedom is the condition essential to development.

2. Since all things have proceeded from the divine unity, the child can find himself mirrored in the lesser things of nature, in the forms and laws, structures and functions of plant, and animal. Therefore a study of nature is one great means of approaching clear consciousness of divine unity. To the little child this comes in the form of impersonations and play.

3. The family is the type of social organization. A co-operative community is the requisite environment for the growing child, into which he enters by play and by actual participation in its industries and festivals.

4. Intellectual analysis, synthesis, and reflective thought belong to the stage of the boyhood and youth, rising through education nearer to the goal, which is clearness toward his relations to the trinity—nature, man, God.

What is the basis afforded by the theory of evolution? How does it differ from Froebel's thought? What effects has its adoption on kindergarten procedure, and especially upon the programme? These are some of the questions that naturally arise.

II. MODIFICATIONS SUGGESTED BY THE EVOLUTIONARY POINT OF VIEW

The theory of evolution makes the child one with all nature in these essential points:

1. He is a growing and changing organism.

2. Growth goes on by means of his own efforts to adjust himself to his environing world.

3. His equipment for this adjustment is his stock of reflexes, instincts, and impulses to act which throw him into contact with the objective world.

4. Out of these contacts come stimuli which are registered, held to, or avoided, and which furnish him through his reactions upon them with sensations, perceptions, and images which he can manipulate as memory or imagination and from which he derives his concepts and conceptual world. His reactions to stimuli either grow into larger, more efficient ways of dealing with this world of things and forces, or harden into fixed habits.

Educational Propositions

1. The clue to education consists in controlling the stimuli so that the responses which the child makes will be the most fruitful for him in terms of imagery, concept, and control.

2. As the individual shapes his growth by reactions upon stimuli, so society has shaped itself. The school is one instrument of society for perpetuating its ideals and habits, or for enlarging and purifying them according as it selects school conditions.

Psychological Modifications

What have we in this evolutionary theory not already given us in the psychologic insights and philosophic outlook of Froebel? An examination of the two plans readily yields a parallel. It shows almost every important generalization that Froebel made on the process of mental growth with this most weighty addition: *We now know not merely that such and such is the order of growth, but we know with some definiteness how such and such processes affect later processes. In other words, we know more about the causal links in the series.*

We know, for example, both in brain terms and in mind terms more of the interrelation of sense and motor processes. We know also that certain brain conditions parallel mental states. We know something of the physiological accompaniments of emotional states and their consequent reaction on body conditions, as well as the converse. We know more inti-

mately the instinctive side of life. We have at our command a remarkable study of the mode in which imitation provides for the intellectual control demanded in invention. The unitary nature of consciousness is affirmed by Froebel; and since his time this conception has replaced the old faculty psychology. The motor nature of consciousness which Froebel assumed is verified. But when we come to the subject of the growth of concepts we do not find the same confirmation for Froebel's belief in the inner norms or germs of thought which project themselves, so to speak, upon the objective world and in this world find their correspondences. This belief of Froebel's gave rise to his symbol, the awakener of the inner germ which rises thereby into a general idea or feeling of truth.

Modern psychology shows that the concept gradually emerges as the running together of like elements met over and over again in varying complexes, until they become in themselves *one*, an experience, a thought, which is the result of a long process, from dimness to clearness. The view of symbolism, then, which holds, for example, that the reason why a babe is charmed with a clock is because of his presentiment of the meaning and value of time is not supported by modern psychology. Nor is the belief that as an infant gazes at a ball it has a dim presentiment of the great truths of which it is a symbol. The view that makes many, countless, typical experiences yield their gradually rising increment of thought, until it climbs above the threshold into clearness is justified.

It follows therefore—and this is a main line of cleavage—that whatever in individual kindergarten exercise or programme seems to force the earlier point of view, regardless of children's own interest or continuity, is questioned.

To sum up, this difference is also one of emphasis. Froebel and many of his followers emphasized the *innate microcosmic germ*, while evolutionary thought emphasizes the effort of the mind-body-organism to adjust itself to the stress and strain, the push and pull of the outer world. The stress of modern thought falls upon the value of the inner impulse to act, rather than the inner germinal idea, not upon the innate prescience of meaning

in the symbol, but upon the *act which converts the symbol into meaning*.

Social Affirmations

What does modern evolutionary theory contribute to Froebel's views on social education? It gives most absolute affirmation of their validity. It is scarcely necessary to review the modern grounds of justification, they are so familiar to all. The biological significance of play is undoubted. The relation of instinctive modes of play to racial activities is a hypothesis that adds weight to Froebel's view of racial stages and their reflection in child life.⁶

The creative character of play is recognized. The need of direction and partial control of play-activities is insisted upon for educational ends. No class of educators looks upon the Santa Barbara experiment in the "free-play-programme" as final in this regard. Belief in play has resulted in a great national organization for its promotion through the establishment and maintenance of playgrounds and play festivals. It has spread upward through the social settlement to play and art for young people of all ages.

The game is a recognized social instrument to entrain to group action, leadership, and self-subordination. The social imitation play is recognized as an adjustment by the child to the social aspects of his environment, yielding social comprehension. Similarly constructive plays add to this increment that of intellectual control of materials and forces.

The school is recognized as ideally a community, not an aggregation—a working and playing group of children, taking upon themselves social initiation. A comparison of Froebel's ideal school sketched in the chapters on the "Boyhood of Man" and "Man as a Scholar and Pupil" ⁷ with the school of Dr. Dewey's "School and Society" shows how prophetic was Froebel's social insight.

[The conclusion of this article which will appear in the February number will be upon "The Present Situation."—ED.]

⁶ Froebel, *The Education of Man*, pp. 40, 41.

⁷ *Op. cit.*